

But You Like Her Better

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But You Like Her Better

by [Hopefulturtle](#)

Summary

“To his horror he realizes he’s not just coughing, there’s something caught in his throat, he’s choking. In his panic, he’s reaching his hand up to his mouth and into his throat. He grabs onto something and rips it out. The relief of being able to take deep breath is short lived. He goes to look at what obstructed his breathing.

There’s a single, white petal, curled up in his hand and coated in saliva.”

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Chapter 1

It starts when Dream looks at George's twitter, goes to check if he's tweeted anything new before he falls asleep, but sees something he wasn't expecting. Tweets back and forth between him and someone named 'Maia'. Tweets about simping, blushing emojis...

And he realizes, George is flirting with someone. He doesn't understand why, but the thought twists something inside him, pulls at him until it hurts. He's looking at the tweets on his screen even after he's done reading them, asking himself why he cares so much, why wasn't his first thought to be happy for George?

His phone buzzes on his desk and he picks it up, eager to take his eyes off his computer screen. There's a new text from Sapnap so he opens it.

Dude look at Georges twitter he's tweeting that girl who wrote prom dress

Oh, so that's who she was. He texted back:

So what

Sapnap began texting and then stopped. Dream considers that his message may have sounded a little off, but before he can send another message, Sapnap responds:

He's gonna date a celebrity bro is that not cool??

A celebrity? Dream thinks, maybe she had a few good songs but does she have 7 million subscribers?

...Wait, why is he thinking like that? He's making it seem like some sort of competition over who is more of a celebrity, which of course he doesn't care about. He sends a text back to Sapnap so he doesn't leave him on read.

Cool that he'll get a gf and stop having time for us?

Of course, that must be it. That's why his stomach was in knots. If George gets a girlfriend he'll probably simp over her so hard that he'll stop filming videos with him-- with the team. He gets another text from Sapnap.

What?? U jealous or something?

Dream laughs. Jealous? Of George for having some semi-famous girl flirt with him? No way, he wouldn't have looked twice at that flirty tweet if it was sent to him instead of George. He never really imagined that George would be the type to receive a message like this. Not that he thinks his friend isn't attractive or anything, he's just never considered this happening.

So he lets himself imagine it. What if George had a girlfriend? He thinks, but is unprepared for the wave of such a sick feeling washing over him. It's indescribable, it makes him feel gross.

He doesn't reply to Sapnap and goes to twitter instead, he tells people not to message him. He blocks Maia. The feeling keeps growing and getting worse. It's hard to admit, but if he's honest, it's overwhelming.

It's when he's laying down with the music on that was meant to clear his head, that he allows

himself to think again. He wonders if he'll be emotionally prepared to join the planned livestream tomorrow. George will be there...

He wants to lecture himself for the wave of emotion that hits him, but has honestly given up on that for tonight. Right now, he just wants to try and understand what's going on in his head.

Dream's drifting off, but remembers Sapp's last text to him. "*What?? U jealous?*" Of course not, he tells himself again. He wouldn't be jealous that George got a musician's attention. His thoughts slow, when he's on the verge of sleep, his mind unhelpfully supplies him with one last thought.

Oh, I'm not jealous that George got the attention of a celebrity. I'm jealous that I'm not the one he's flirting with.

Dream wakes up with the urge to vomit. Barely awake, he runs into his bathroom. There's not even enough time for him to crouch over the toilet, he leans his arms on either side of his sink and begins to...cough. Doesn't throw up, just coughs. A lot, actually, enough for it to be considered a coughing fit.

To his horror he realizes he's not just coughing, there's something caught in his throat, he's choking. In his panic, he's reaching his hand up to his mouth and into his throat. He grabs onto something and rips it out. The relief of being able to take deep breath is short lived. He goes to look at what obstructed his breathing.

There's a single, white petal, curled up in his hand and coated in saliva.

He leans over his sink again, and this time he really does throw up. It's out of fear, it's from the feeling of his heart dropping and blood running cold. When he's done he can't do much except lower his shaking legs to the ground to avoid falling over. His head is empty and his heart is racing.

It takes him a few minutes before he's able to calm down long enough to really assess the situation. He's not dumb, anyone would know what this means. Hanahaki was a disease that would cause it's victims lungs to fill with flower petals. Petals like the one Dream was holding in his palm.

This was not news to Dream, the disease is rare, but is still common knowledge. What he didn't understand, however, was why it was happening to him. This disease only struck those who suffered from unrequited love. Dream wasn't in lo-

He pauses.

...It's George.

Holy shit, it's *George*. He's thinking back to last night and it's much clearer now. Why else would he be so upset? That disgusting feeling, it was jealousy, and even worse, it was the feeling of his lungs growing the roots that will consume him.

But he's still in denial. It can't be George, he's never thought he was in love with him before this moment. Sure, he *would* get butterflies when George playfully flirted with him, but that's just because it's embarrassing. And maybe he *had* considered it when George brought up a whole marriage plan so he could go to the United States. And yeah, maybe he *was* fucking jealous that he wasn't the one George was in love with-

He forces himself to stop. He's convinced of two things now. 1. He's in love with his best friend. And 2...

This is how he's going to die.

He doesn't know how much time passes before he's able to get to his feet. Still shaking, he steadies himself on the counter and gives himself a moment before he walks back to his room.

There is a cure for Hanahaki. Well, there sometimes is. You have to confess your feelings to the one you love, or you have to fall out of love. Dream can't imagine why someone wouldn't admit their feelings, if only to survive the disease. He thinks if he has to choose between death or an awkward moment with George, his decision would be immediately clear.

He sits down on his bed, and although he just woke up, he's completely exhausted. That's when he remembers he's supposed to live stream today. He should probably wait until after the stream to talk to George, but when he really focuses, he can feel the roots in his lungs, and how they expand when he breathes.

Dream decided this can't wait, more out of anxiety than anything else. He doesn't want to fucking die. He doesn't want to wait until the disease develops either. He has to tell George now.

Picking his phone up off his desk, he sees missed messages from Sapnap and remembers he didn't respond to him last night. He opens the messaging app to read his texts.

Wait really?

A few minutes later, another one:

My bad I didn't know

And, an hour later, another:

Are you ok?

He starts to type, but doesn't know what to say. Does this mean Sapnap knew who he liked? Did he know which one of the two he was jealous over? He replies simply:

Yeah

He gets multiple responses almost instantly:

Dude I thought you died or something

Respond faster next time >:((

Are you still on for the stream today?

He considers it for a moment, and thinks he couldn't make himself entertaining if he tried right now. So maybe it was a better idea to cancel the stream. He needs to talk to George first, anyways. He responds to Sapnap:

Not today

He waits, knowing Sapnap won't take long to reply.

Alright, hope ur doing ok man

Figuring that is the end of the conversation, he closes the app and then starts up his computer. There's a question lingering in his head now, he knows he's going to tell George, but how? It

seems like an impossible conversation to start. *“Hey I’m puking flowers because I’m in love with you, no big deal just thought you should know”?*

Impatience makes him open his call program, he’ll just wing it, say it as he goes. He was never one for planning ahead anyways. He just needs to get this over with, he’s gotta do it now before he overthinks it. And so he goes to George’s name in his contacts and calls him.

The calls on this program immediately start up as a video chat, and even though George has seen him in real life already, he still turns off his camera when they call.

The call rings, once, twice, and begins a third time before George picks up.

“Hello?”

George’s voice comes out through Dreams headphones and he sees George on his screen, he’s beginning to regret his decision. It’s gonna be especially hard if he can see George’s face while he confesses. Shit, he’s overthinking it-

“Dream? Can you hear me?” George looks at his camera and seems confused. Fuck his heart is pounding, he just needs to say something.

“Uhh, hi, yeah, hi,” are the words that fall out of his mouth. *You sound like a fucking dumbass*, he curses at himself.

“Hey!” George is smiling and Dream softly hopes it’s because of him. “Are we starting the stream already? It’s a little early.”

This...is so much harder than he pictured it being. How in the hell is he supposed to confess when George is looking at him through his camera? He really doesn’t wanna see his disappointed reaction, he wouldn’t be able to handle-

“Are you there? Hellooooo?”

Shit. “Yeah, I’m here.” He really needs to stop with the awkward pauses.

“I think you might have a bad connection,” George laughs, “So is this about the stream?”

“Yeah- I mean no- uh,” Fuck it, who cares if he sounds awkward. This is a matter of life or death, George will understand if he values Dream’s life at all. “I actually needed to talk to you.”

“Oh,” George’s eyes widened. *If that caught him off guard, he’s not gonna be prepared for what’s next.* “What’s up?”

“Well, I- no wait- I mean this morning I-” God he can’t fucking talk. “I was just thinking- and, uh, I...”

He can’t. But he has to. But he *can’t*.

“Dream?” Dream didn’t realize he had stopped looking at the screen until he looked back at the mention of his voice. “Dream, what’s going on? Are you okay?” Screw George’s soft voice and kind words, screw his concerned eyes, screw his handsome face, screw everything about George that is making Dream not think straight.

He’s looking at George, and now he knows why this disease kills people.

Right now, he’d rather die than tell him.

“It-” Dream gives a defeated sigh. “It is about the stream, actually.” He’s given up. “I’m not gonna be able to today.”

“That’s all? Dream, you were starting to worry me!” George seems to sigh as well, maybe in relief. “So just no stream today? Are you doing alright?”

“Yeah, something just came up.” *A flower petal, to be specific.* “Sorry to disappoint.”

“No dude, not at all, just don’t go scaring me like that,” George was starting to smile again. “We’ll just reschedule, no worries.”

“Alright, sounds good.” Dream notices his hands had been shaking when he moves one to cover his mouse. “I’m gonna get going then.” He hovers the cursor over the end call button.

“Okay, see you later, Dream!” He ends the call.

...*Shit*

Well, that didn’t really go as planned.

Dream leans over his desk and puts his face into his hands. He really couldn’t go through with it, huh? He’s fucked now.

But then he realizes he doesn’t actually have to tell George. There is another, less reliable, way. He just has to fall out of love with George. That can’t be too hard.

Two months later he realizes that it is, in fact, very hard to fall out of love with someone. He also learns that flowers in your lungs is a very unpleasant feeling, taking a deep breath is proving to be much more difficult. And now when he laughs, his wheezing is a lot worse.

It’s pretty difficult to keep your distance from someone you basically work with. Dream tried to. Too many people asking where George went if he wasn’t in one of his videos, which completely defeats the purpose of trying to keep his distance. It feels like everyone on the internet needs to know where George is when he’s not with Dream. Dream thinks it’s some cruel joke that he can’t avoid George. So he gives up on trying.

George is still talking to Maia. Are they dating? Who the fuck knows. Dream doesn’t want to know, because either way it won’t stop his lungs from forming a garden inside of him.

Dream is lying to himself when he thinks he’s handling the disease well. He’ll act like he’s not suffocating in his sleep and waking up choking. He pretends he doesn’t mute his mic on calls to avoid people hearing him cough up a lung. However, he can’t deny it anymore after today’s stream.

It’s a donation with the caption, “*George tell Dream you love him*” that starts his nightmare.

“Noooo” George whines. “I’m not gonna have that audio out there.” and he laughs.

Meanwhile, Dream’s heart is threatening to explode. “Come on George, they gave you like ten dollars,” Dream will say he’s doing it for fan service, but he can’t deny he wants to hear it. “Say it, coward.”

“Nah, that’s gonna take more than that.” George bites back. “Not about to confess my love over ten dollars.”

Dream knows this is a joke, they always tease each other over stuff like that. But despite what he knows, he can't stop feeling like his head is spinning. He's literally dying to hear it, after all.

"How much then?" Dream's trying to keep up with the game as well as his racing thoughts.

"Um," George chuckles nervously and Dream prays he didn't cross some line. "I mean I'm not gay, but twenty dollars is twenty dollars." He jokes.

Dream is so tempted to donate a twenty to Georges stream, but it turns out he doesn't have to. There's another donation, this caption says, "*SAY IT!!!*"

His lungs are itching, it's almost like he can feel the flowers grow. The thought is disturbing him, but he's too distracted by the situation that's unfolding to care at all.

The donation text is fading and George hasn't said anything. He wonders if the whole joke was actually making him uncomfortable.

"Shoot, someone actually did it haha," George laughs.

"Oh really?" He pretends like he wasn't waiting for the donation to appear- like he wasn't about to donate himself if someone else didn't. "Well now you have to."

"Alright, fine. Dream," Dream's heart fucking stops. "I love you."

fuckfuckshitfuck

He tries to respond or even laugh to avoid an awkward silence, but then his breath catches in his throat and he starts choking. He was beginning to suspect his disease would get worse whenever George did something that made his heart melt. But this confirmed it.

He realizes he forgot to mute himself and everyone could hear him struggling to breathe. George must have thought it was part of the act because he could hear him chuckle a little bit. Which made Dream's journey to inhale just a bit more challenging.

Muting his mic, for whatever reason, was his first priority. After that, he reached his hand into his mouth and, instead of feeling a petal, his hand reached around more of a stick like object. A stick?? *No way there's already a bush in my lungs, what the fuck.* He coughs hard while pulling and it works. Turns out it wasn't a stick.

It was a stem.

And at the end of the stem was a fully bloomed flower. And he hadn't put much thought into it before, but now that he's looking at it, he realizes it's a white carnation.

Huh, that's George's favorite.

He still feels them in his lungs, but he's been muted for a good while now and people are gonna start questioning him if he doesn't rejoin the stream.

"Look what you guys made me do!" George is speaking to the audience. "I embarrassed him so hard that I sent him into an asthma attack." He's laughing and giggling and the sound is so perfect to Dream. It's starting to scare Dream, the plan to fall out of love with him is really beginning to seem impossible.

A donation pops up, "*Lmao Dream fucking died*"

Another one says, *“bet Dream hasn’t heard that since Maia showed up”*

Dream has to force his thoughts to stop, he can’t let himself start thinking about his disease or Maia. He can do that later, but right now he really has to focus on the stream.

Unmuting his mic, he returns to the stream with a “I didn’t fucking die,” and a fake laugh.

The stream continues for a bit, Dream putting all his thoughts on pause until the stream is over. He hopes he can just get through it on autopilot. Unfortunately, after the first donation mentioning Maia, a lot more kept coming. Some of them suggesting Dream was jealous, others were asking if George and Maia were in a relationship.

George seemed to be avoiding all these donations just like Dream was. Which made him wonder, is he ignoring them because it’s just a weirdly personal question in general, or is it because...they are in a relationship?

No, no, NO. He is NOT going to think about that, and he is NOT gonna feel jealous over something that might not even be happening. But the way George gives no comment makes him worry.

The stream ends about half an hour later and Dream thinks he has never been so relieved. Now that he’s out of the stream he can cough out the rest of these stupid flowers. He reaches for a bag near his bed. He’s had to start keeping one there ever since he started waking up in the night to cough out petals.

He begins to cough and retch into the bag. He sounds disgusting but it feels so much better to clear out his airways even a little bit. He puts the bag down when he feels like he’s done and lets out a few more meek coughs. It’s when he’s reaching for the water bottle on his desk that his eyes graze his screen and his heart stops.

“Dream...?”

HE DIDN’T LEAVE THE FUCKING CALL.

Instead of responding, he goes into another coughing fit, more petals falling from his mouth.

“Dream, are you okay?! What’s happening?” George sounds so worried.

“I’m fine-” He’s able to choke out before coughing again.

“Clearly not!”

“I just choked on my water,” He lies and finally gets his breathing under control. “I’m ok, really.”

“But you-”

“I have to go, ‘night George.”

“Drea-”

He ends the call.

Fuck. Hopefully George isn’t onto him. He should’ve been more careful. That stream was a total disaster. He figures that as long as he’s careful from now on, if he doesn’t seem suspicious, maybe George will forget that this happened.

Then, he thinks about what would happen if George knew. Would he pity him? Would he feel bad

that he's causing Dream so much pain? Would he blame himself? Dream pictures George's reaction and feels himself getting sad. Maybe if George knew, he would try to help him. George might try to... fall in love with Dream, in order to cure him. He should stop. Thinking like that might get his hopes up.

Later that night, when he can't sleep, his mind supplies him with another thought. He can't confess to George, he can't fall out of love with George, but maybe, he could get George to have feelings for him.

He thinks about it, he has playfully flirted a lot with George, is it possible that any part of the act of him flirting back was real? Could it be that maybe it was subconscious like his feelings had been when this began? He makes his heart race with these thoughts, if he isn't careful he might just start coughing again.

But...what about Maia?

Honestly he's been trying not to think about her. She seemed like a nice person, and nobody is at fault in causing Dream this pain except maybe himself. If George was dating Maia, he might get mad at Dream for acting flirty with him.

But what else is he supposed to do? He's out of options. It's either this or he comes to terms with his slow death. He still doesn't want to die.

So that's his plan then.

And after a week, almost immediately after it was put into action, it failed horribly.

Dream was recording a video with George and Sapnap, which they were all excited for after Dream had been opting out of recording for the last week. He needed time to get himself together and prepare to act out his plan. And even then he had to wait through half of the recording to actually try it.

In this video, Sapnap was going to be trying to complete minecraft while George and Dream hunted him. Dream liked this idea since it would put him and George on a team and perhaps give him more opportunities.

While searching for Sapnap, they saw that he got the achievement '*Hot stuff*' for getting lava.

"Hot stuff?" George questioned after seeing the achievement, probably trying to remember what it meant.

"Yeah," It's now or never. "Like you, George."

"Dream!" George started laughing, he probably figured that Dream was doing more fan service. "We don't have time for that! He's already in the nether, Dream."

"No! Keep flirting and give me time to run away," Sapnap encouraged as he got the next achievement of him getting to the nether showed up, '*We need to go deeper*'.

"I could make a joke out of that one too," Dream smirked.

"DREAM!" George yells in a higher pitch. "That's not wholesome." He says, but he's still laughing. It wasn't a bad reaction, but he wanted George to take the bait and flirt back with him.

It became an ongoing theme of the video, Dream flirting with George. It was less of a back and

forth and more just Dream saying things he knew would make George flustered, as well as being very helpful to him during the video and saving him when he was in danger of dying.

Dream at one point decided to jump up onto a crafting table, we all know where that goes.

“Oooh, Dream,” George said in response once he noticed.

“What are you guys plotting?” Sapnap must have thought they were planning a way to stop him from winning.

“Nothing,” George responded. “Dream’s just trying to be cute standing on a crafting table.”

Dream knew that was somewhat of an insult, but hearing his name and the word cute leave George’s mouth in the same sentence gave him butterflies.

“Are you saying I’m not cute, George?” He moved his game avatar close to George’s so it seemed like they were looking at each other.

“Oh shush,” George laughed. Not really the response he wanted, just like all the other attempts.

“You’re breaking his poor heart, George.” Sapnap joined in. If only he knew.

There’s a few more unsuccessful attempts at flirting before the video ends. George decides to stay on the call with him after Sapnap leaves so they can edit their videos together. They talk in small conversations, nothing special, but the whole time they are talking Dream is worried that George will bring up certain parts of the video. And turns out he was right to be worried.

“I’m editing the part with the crafting table.” George says and Dream instantly tries to decipher his tone. He seems happy, or maybe it’s hopeful thinking. “Remember that?”

“Haha, yeah,” Dream’s suddenly all too aware of the pressure in his lungs. He might as well go for it. “Pretty cute, right?” He tries. It isn’t for a video anymore, whatever George says. But if it does end up being negative, it’s still possible to write off as a joke.

“Why do this if we aren’t recording?” George laughs but Dream thinks it sounds a little forced.

“Can’t a man just ask his bro if he’s cute?” Dream retaliates.

“Do you want me to tell you that you are?”

“Only if you mean it, Georgy.” He teases him with the nickname.

“You wish,” George teases right back at him.

And god, he really does wish.

But the conversation ends there. The call not too long after. Dream is left alone again to cough out all the flowers that threaten to suffocate him. He found out that coughing out entire flowers whole usually signifies the final stages of the disease. But then again, it typically takes nearly a year to get to that stage and it’s only been a few months.

Honestly, he has no idea how much time he has left.

For the first time during this whole disaster, he allows himself to think about the possibility of death. Because honestly, what other direction could this head in? Maybe it’s better to look into the inevitable and let it just be as it is. He could always try to confess again, but he thinks that perhaps

he should die being friends with George rather than live and never talk to him again.

He goes on twitter and see's some people @ing George to a video. He can see Maia in the thumbnail. Against his better judgement, he decides to watch the video. He doesn't skip to the specific part George was told to watch and instead watches the whole thing.

Maia is really nice, just everything about her. Her voice is beautiful, she's pretty, and she's everything Dream isn't. How could George not fall for her? It's honestly been selfish of Dream to wish George would be with him instead, when he could be with her.

She talks about George at one point in the video, she confirms they are still talking. She also watches one of his videos and smiles the whole time.

You wish, George had said. And Dream does wish, he wishes he was Maia.

Before he knows it, another month has passed. It's torture. Being short of breath all the time really sucks the life out of everything you do. He hardly records or livestreams, and when he does, he's stopped muting himself to cough. There's no point if he's choking every other minute. His fans worry for his health probably more than he does.

He nearly forgets that his birthday is next week. It's actually George who reminds him while they're on a call together after recording.

"So what are you doing for your birthday?" George asks him. At this rate, dying, was Dream's first thought.

"Honestly? Nothing." His voice has gotten a lot raspier lately, on some bad days he even loses it.

"Did you maybe wanna do something?"

"What were you thinking?"

"This is kinda sudden, but I was thinking maybe I could fly out to see you?"

Well, he wasn't expecting that. Despite his constant tired state and sore lungs, he really does want to see George. One last time, his brain unhelpfully adds.

"W-we don't have to of course, I was just--"

"No, I actually think that's a good idea." He can't help but smile.

"Oh cool!" George sounds excited and Dream's heart gives a weak flutter. He guesses no matter how threatening the fear of dying is, his life is worth his friendship with George.

"When are you flying out?"

"The day before your birthday, I was hoping," He says. "So we can celebrate the whole day!" Dream isn't looking, but he knows George is smiling. He imagines how cute he must look. It's a thought he's been allowing himself more often, where he used to deny and wish against these feelings for George, when he's faced with certain death, he thinks he at least deserves to find his own happiness from George's.

"That sounds good," He does his best to sound excited. He is, of course, but it's hard to convey that emotion with a torn up throat. "I've missed you, man."

"I've missed you too! I've got you the best birthday present as well."

“What is it?”

“Dream! I can’t just tell you,” George giggles, “it’s a surprise.”

“Hope it’s a good one-” if it’s the last “-if you keep me waiting all week.”

“It’s the best,” George assures him. “Just trust me.”

“Alright, I’m counting on you.”

Dream wakes up the next morning. He doesn’t remember when he fell asleep. That had been happening a lot more lately. Sleeping suddenly and for far too long. His body’s getting tired, he can tell. He tries to remember what he was doing before he fell asleep, that’s when he noticed his call with George never ended.

It checks his clock and sees a whole ten hours have passed, he wonders if George is still awake.

But then he feels the familiar tickling in his throat and rushes to mute his side of the call. Immediately after he does, he begins coughing off the side of the bed, as usual, the coughing becomes choking, and then it becomes a battle to breathe.

An easier method he’s found to get them out is through forcing himself to vomit. He’s actually started placing a trash can at the edge of his bed for moments like this. He shoves his fingers into his mouth and begins to retch, bile falls from his mouth and is followed by pretty white flowers. Whole flowers, as that’s pretty much all it is these days.

He groans and moves the trash can away to avoid looking into it. It’s like how matter how many times he clears his lungs, there’s an endless supply more waiting for him.

He wonders if he’ll even still be alive by his birthday.

Gathering his strength, he unmutes himself.

“You awake?” He asks softly.

“Yeah,” The reply is fast. “Have been for a bit now.”

“Sorry for falling asleep on you.”

“It’s alright, you sounded tired.”

Dreams throat is burning, he wishes he didn’t have to talk. In fact he wishes he didn’t have to do anything anymore. He was so sore constantly now. He wants more than anything to be able to sleep off this feeling, but he only ever wakes up more tired.

“Has anyone ever told you that you talk in your sleep?” George asks him. It takes Dream a second to process what he says, and another to realize what that implies. “You cough a lot, too.”

“I actually didn’t know that I sleep talk.” He answers honestly. “Sorry about that too, then.”

“No, it’s ok. It’s just- it’s ok.” That tone in George’s voice is really making Dream wonder what he said.

“I didn’t say anything weird, right?”

“Nah,”

Somehow he isn't convinced.

Dream ends up telling George he has to go, that he has plans today. It's a complete lie, but he doesn't want George to hear him when he sounds like this.

As the days go by, Dream gets exponentially worse. He's just going through the days lying down, sometimes in pain, sometimes numb. He doesn't upload videos, he doesn't reply to texts- the only thought getting him through the week is the promise of George at the end of it. He just wants to live that long, that's all. If he can just do that, he'll be content.

And when the day arrives, Dream is the happiest he's been all month. George lets him know when his plane ends. Everything is really blurry, but he's still excited.

He's managed to cough up as many flowers as he can before George arrives, as well as hide everything in his rooms that would suggest his worsening disease. Trash cans, bags, and loads of medicine are all hidden away.

His phone vibrates and he instantly knows it's George.

I'm outside!! :D

He reads the text and heads to his door. He just needs to make it through the next two days and hide his illness in the process. It's just two days, he can do that, right?

His door feels indescribably heavy as he pulls it open.

"Dream!!" George's smile looks brighter than the sun, like if he looks at him too long he'll go blind. His eyes are so bright and his hair looks so soft. His heart is melting, and he prays it won't stop.

George picks up his suitcase before he comes inside and closes the door behind him. "Dream! It's been way too long! We'll it's only been a few months, but I-"

Dream was so focused on George that he didn't notice how shallowly he was breathing, even worse, how light-headed he was becoming.

"...Dream?" George seems caught off guard as well.

Dream tries to talk, but finds himself struggling to take a breath. Against the small amount of willpower he has left, he begins to lose his balance.

"Dream?!"

He's expecting to hit the hard floor beneath him, but instead he is caught. He focuses for a moment to realize he is in George's arms. George caught him. He's so warm.

"Dream?! Oh my god, you look so pale- Dream, what's going on??"

"Of course I'm pale, I'm a gamer."

"Dream, stop joking! What's happening?"

What is he supposed to say? He doesn't think about it for too long. George drags his body over to the couch next to his door and sits him down. Dream can't even sit up though, so he just falls and lays across it.

Not even a second passes before he's coughing. He thinks maybe George is talking to him, but the pain of coughing is so overwhelming that he can't focus on anything else.

He vomits weakly, he doesn't know how he manages that, he doesn't remember the last time he ate. But then he sees it. It's red. It's covering the arm he was laying on and he notices there's flowers mixed in with it. So much for not letting George find out.

"Dream...are these...carnations...?"

"I'm just glad you don't like roses."

"Dream...! What are you saying?!"

He doesn't think he could speak anymore if tried. He noticed George's eyes are tearing up, he's shaking, he looks so scared and confused. This sucks, he really wasn't planning on dying in front of George. It makes him feel selfish.

George is yelling at him, telling him to say something, asking if he should call an ambulance. The words go right through him. He's given up hearing to focus on seeing. He just wants to see George, at least he's comforted by the fact he's not dying alone.

But he doesn't like seeing him cry or shake, he wants to comfort him too.

He reaches out his arms out and cups his hands on either side of George's face. George seems to stop talking for a moment. He pulls George's face towards his.

He kisses him.

His lips are soft.

He hopes George tastes the flowers more than he tastes the blood.

And then he falls back, he can't remember the last breath he took, but he figures it was the final one. Because the corners of his vision are getting dark, he knows George is screaming, but can no longer hear him. He just wants to tell him how much he loves him...

Wow, he probably should have done that sooner.

Aftermath

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Thoughts aren't registering, feelings are though.

There isn't much to feel, hands push down on his chest, putting pressure on his lungs repeatedly. It kinda hurts. But it's less of a flaring burn and more of an ember going out.

But it doesn't go out, in fact it's starting to feel like a vanishing fire that's been doused with gasoline-

Scratch that, it *really* hurts.

Along with the pain, he gains a coherent thought.

Am I dead?

The ability to think comes and goes, so he doesn't have a lot of time to process, but he thinks if he's not dead, he must be dying.

His lungs suddenly fill, but he doesn't feel like he's breathing, more like someone else is breathing for him.

When the new oxygen enters his lungs, his vision begins to clear and it makes sense. Definitely not his air.

It's George's.

He's above him, pressing their mouths together. Weird, Dream was sure he'd go to hell when he died, but if he's kissing George then he must be in heaven.

But then the pressure on his lips is gone and moved back to his chest, this time he can really feel it when hands beat down on him repeatedly. That shit fucking *hurts*. He feels his ribs bend and dig into his lungs.

After the wave of compressions on his chest ends, he sees George lowering his face towards his own again. Well, whatever afterlife he's in, he might as well go for it, right?

He turns his head and lifts it from where it layed, meeting George's movement halfway and their lips almost touch, then George freezes and turns away.

"Oh my god, Dream?!" He hears George say, it sounds distant but it's very much there. "Did you just move? Can you hear me?"

People usually don't act so scared when they're kissing someone. Wait, Dream thinks, what was even happening before this moment?

Oh right, he was dying, maybe he should get on with that.

"Dream?!" George yells and it doesn't sound like he's hearing his voice from underwater anymore. It's so loud and sudden that it seems to flip some sort of switch that takes Dream out of his trance-like state.

“George?” He groans. Dream is looking at him like he’s trying to solve a puzzle. His vision focuses, and that’s when he sees how upset George looks. Upset, really, is an understatement. George actually looks terrified, he’s shaking with wide eyes.

“Thank *god*.” George says and it sounds like a sob. As he says it his head falls and rests on the edge of the couch, Dream can feel George’s hair against his arm.

“Are you okay?” Dream’s first instinct is to comfort him, even if his voice comes out broken.

“You-” George’s head lifts back up from the couch. “You’re asking *me* that??”

Dream is about to follow it up with a: ‘Well, *are* you?’ but George speaks before him.

“Yes, I’m okay,” He says it like it doesn’t matter “You’re gonna be okay, too. I called an ambulance and they’ll be here soon, just hang on, alright?” He’s speaking fast, not all of the panic has left his voice.

“Nooo,” Dream whines. “George, those are so expensive in America.” He complains in response to the mention of an ambulance.

“Dream, you are worried about all the wrong things,” He gives an exasperated laugh. Dream smiles.

The ambulance arrives against Dream’s wishes. When EMT’s hoist him off the couch, he gets a chance to see the scene he was previously laying in. It’s covered with flowers, a lot of them. Dream wonders if he spit up even more while unconscious.

Dream thinks there’s enough that he probably could have provided flowers to his own funeral. He confuses the EMT’s when he laughs.

George stays with him in the ambulance. At first, Dream is too surrounded by people trying to check his vitals to really see George, but after that, George stands right next to him. Dream tries to start a conversation, he has a question in his head anyways.

“George?” He starts. “What was happening right before I woke up?”

“Well, I called 911 and they said they would send help,” George tells him. “They also told me to start giving you chest compressions and CPR.”

...Oh, it was *CPR*. George was trying to save his life and Dream thought they were-

“Why do you ask?”

“Oh, uh, no reason,” He feels his face get hot and looks away.

The ride to the hospital isn’t long, but it is quiet.

Dream begins to think and wonders how in the hell he survived. Is it possible that his lungs didn’t fail? When he wasn’t able to breathe, was there just a flower stuck in his airways? How long was he unconscious for, anyway? But the question at the front of his mind is: why doesn’t he feel like he’s suffocating anymore?

He doesn’t have to strain to inhale, he realizes how much he took breathing for granted before he got sick. He’s unsure whether or not he’d be able to take a deep breath if he tried, but he doesn’t wanna risk a coughing fit and worry George.

When they arrive, he is wheeled into the building. George follows him and the medical staff until someone steps in front of him.

“There’s only family allowed beyond this point, are you two relatives?” A nurse asks George.

“Oh, we’re, um-” George pauses and looks at Dream for help.

Dream doesn’t want George to leave him, he mouths ‘cousins’ at George hoping he’ll understand.

“H-husbands?” George looks at Dream and seems flustered. Dream has to utilize all his willpower not to laugh at George’s misunderstanding.

But they let him through, and they are placed into a small and private room. Dream is given fluids and minerals through IV’s. They tell him that, among other things, he’s malnourished and dehydrated. Neither of those diagnoses surprise Dream.

They are left alone again, Dream is lying in a hospital bed and George sits in a chair beside him. They remain silent and Dream can feel the tension set in the room. He thinks now would be a good time to apologize.

“Husbands, huh?” Is what leaves his mouth though. He instantly regrets it. Dream thinks the teasing wouldn’t have bothered George at all before all this, but now, with the context of how Dream feels about him, George must be uncomfortable.

“I can’t believe you told me to say that.” George says and Dream is overanalyzing his tone, is he actually upset? Is he joking along with him? He can’t tell, but he would give his life to know what George was feeling right now.

“Actually, I told you to say cousins.”

“Wh-” George stutters. “Well they look the same when you’re reading someone’s lips!” George retaliates, Dream can see a small smile on George’s face and is utterly relieved.

That is until silence slips in again.

George’s expression changes back into a worried one. The reality of how he must be feeling sets in for Dream. He pictures it from George’s perspective, arriving at your friend’s house for his birthday only to have him collapse and fucking die in front of you. Not only that, George had to call an ambulance, give him CPR, and literally save his life. He could only imagine how it would feel.

This hasn’t been easy for Dream, but it’s probably been equally as horrible for George.

Not only that, George would have to deal with the fact that *he* was the reason Dream nearly died. But then Dream wonders if George actually knows who put those flowers in his lungs.

He has to ask.

“Do you...” He’s unprepared for how loud his voice sounds in the quiet room. Fuck, how is he supposed to say this? “Do you know who...?” He decides to leave it there.

“What else am I supposed to assume when you kissed me?”

...Oh. He had done that, hadn’t he.

His heart is racing, but George doesn’t stop speaking there.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” George says after a moment. His voice is soft and Dream thinks he doesn’t deserve such a patient tone. It makes his eyes water.

“What would you have done?” Dream’s voice breaks and it makes him feel pathetic, he has to try harder to pull himself together.

George is quiet for another moment. The pause is really getting to Dream, it’s not helping him calm down.

“Well,” George starts, Dream holds his breath. “I wouldn’t have let you die.”

Dream doesn’t really understand what that implies, but now he’s really starting to tear up.

“Im...” Sorry for not telling you, sorry for letting you visit when I knew I was so sick, sorry for almost dying, sorry that I’m about to fucking cry-

“Dream, It’s okay,” George puts his hand on Dream’s arm to comfort him. “I don’t know if I can tell you what you want to hear, but,” He pauses and makes eye contact with Dream. “It’s okay.”

Dream is overwhelmed with how kind George is being. He told him he couldn’t tell him what he wanted to hear, but he told him it was okay, and that itself is exactly what Dream needed.

He lifts the arm that George isn’t holding and lays it over his eyes to hide his face. He thinks distantly that this is the first time he’s cried during the entirety of this disease. He’s breaking down and wishes George didn’t have to witness it.

George doesn’t say anything, he just moves his hand back and forth over Dream’s arm soothingly and let’s him cry quietly until he calms down.

Dream knows he doesn’t deserve any of the sympathy.

When the doctor arrives back into the room, Dream is told he doesn’t have hanahaki. He is confused for a moment but then it’s clarified that he did have it, but no longer does. They had done some sort of x-ray on him in the ambulance, and the results showed dying roots. He was told he would still suffer from some symptoms, but that they should subside within a few weeks.

Dream has no idea how he was cured. He doesn’t think he ever really confessed to George, nor did he fall out of love. But then again, what really counts as a confession? Did the kiss count? Did that last minute decision save his life?

The doctor also unhelpfully recommends marriage counseling.

After some blood tests and supportive care, Dream is allowed to be sent home but is recommended to stay overnight. Dream tells George that he wants to go home and George agrees.

Unfortunately, they have to take a public bus home since they arrived at the hospital via ambulance. Public transport in Florida is rarely a good experience. George complains the bus smells like rotten garbage but Dream insists that they should consider themselves lucky, as it could be much worse.

Dream is insanely exhausted when they get back to his house. He’s ready to collapse on just about any surface and pass out. He doesn’t have the exact time, but it’s dark outside.

“We should probably make some dinner.” George suggests.

“Not hungry, just tired.” Dream protests and goes to lay down on the couch, but changes his mind last second when he sees they dried blood and decaying flowers. If he had any intention to eat before, his appetite would be gone.

“You heard what they said at the hospital, you’re malnourished or something.” George goes into his kitchen. “You don’t have to cook anything, just let me know what you want and I can make it.”

As if Dream would let him do that for him, after everything he’s already put his friend through today. Dream is too tired to argue and just convinces George to just order a pizza.

Eating isn’t a pleasant experience, to say the least. When food arrives, it tastes like cardboard to Dream. He figures throwing up so much temporarily burned off his taste buds.

It’s not only the lack of taste that makes it hard to eat, there is an uncomfortable silence that sets over him and George at the table. Guilt is flowing back into Dream’s mind. He thinks of things he should say to lighten the mood, as he usually does, but comes up blank.

Not even a moment after he finishes a slice, he begins to cough. The feeling is all too familiar and terrifying, he looks at George and watches his eyes go wide.

Looking away, he coughs into his hand and tries to clear his throat.

“A-are you okay?” George makes a move to sit up from his chair.

Dream can’t speak through the coughing, but nods his head to assure George.

When he’s done coughing he pulls his hand away from his mouth and sees it covered in shriveled and dying petals. Damn, even though it’s over he’s still gonna have to deal with this for a while.

“I’m okay,” Dream says after noticing George was still looking at him anxiously.

Dream leaves the table to toss away the petals and wash his hands. When he gets back he sees George isn’t eating and is instead staring at the table intensely, he looks like he has something on his mind. Dream is worried over what it could be.

“Dream,” George calls to him as Dream sits back down at the table. “I think we should, um, talk about what happened?” He says it almost as a question.

He doesn’t want to. That’s actually an understatement. He would rather have the floor open up and swallow him whole. But he also finds himself unable to say ‘no’ to George.

“Yeah,” Dream agrees quietly. “Okay, yeah.” He nods and feels like he’s saying it to himself, convincing himself to go through with it.

“When did you-” George stops and looks like he’s contemplating what to say. “When did this start?”

“The disease or...?” Dream needs clarification as to what George means by ‘this’.

“Yeah, that.”

“About four months ago.”

Dream answers simply, and silence sets in again. He decides to say a little more to avoid dragging out the silence.

"I did try to tell you," He says. "A while back when I had to cancel on a livestream. But you had your camera on, and I-" He doesn't know how to explain it. "I didn't think I could handle seeing your reaction."

"How did you think I would react?"

"Bad." Dream forces a laugh, but George is still looking at him intently. "I dunno man, I thought you would hate me." an '*and I still think you might*' goes unsaid.

"Why?"

"Why??" Dream repeats, confused. "Because I like you? A lot? And we're just friends- and I shouldn't like you- but I do- and you don't feel the same- but I *still* like you- and-" *Shit, he was rambling.*

"Dream, I don't hate you."

"You don't love me either."

...He didn't think before he said that. What was he doing?! It sounds like he's trying to make George feel guilty. *Shit!*

"I'm sorry," Dream apologizes. "Fuck, I didn't mean it like that." He rests his arms up on the table and puts his face in his hands. "I know you don't feel the same, and that's fine, really. I'm sorry."

"It's okay," *No, it's not.* "None of this is anyone's fault. I don't hate you, and this doesn't have to change anything if you don't want it to."

But he *does* want it to. He wants George to look at him differently after this. He wants him to feel the same way.

If he learned anything over the past few months, you can't just change how you feel about someone. George doesn't love him. Even if Dream wants desperately for that not to be the case. But that's okay. George can't help how he feels any more than Dream can.

"You won't leave, then?" Dream asks quietly.

"Of course not, I wouldn't ever."

He lifts up his head and looks and George, for a second he seemed to have a serious expression, but once their eyes met, he offered Dream a small smile.

"What if," Dream decides to get rid of some of the remaining tension. "What if I cheated in manhunt?" He smirks at George.

George chuckles. "We might have some problems then."

"Figured that'd be a deal breaker." Dream didn't realize how tense he was until he relaxed at the sound of George laughing. He smiles.

They put the leftovers in the fridge as they were done eating and then decided to go to bed. Dream didn't have a spare room, his house was pretty small. The couch would be the first option, but clearly wasn't anymore.

Under normal circumstances, they probably would've just shared the bed. But after everything that went down today, Dream figured he wouldn't suggest that, it would probably make George

uncomfortable. He offers George his bed while he can sleep on the floor.

“The floor?” George says in disbelief. “You just got out of the *hospital*, Dream. You can have the bed.”

“That would make me a bad host.” He argues. “You don’t wanna sleep on the floor, do you?”

“Why can’t we just share the bed?”

“Wouldn’t that...make you uncomfortable?”

“It’s literally just a bed. It’s not weird unless you make it weird.”

So that’s that then. Dream knows George said it wasn’t weird, but he lays down on the edge of his side of the bed to give him space anyways.

He can’t help but think this is oddly intimate. Like, they’re sleeping together...wait, no, not like that. Fuck, there he goes, making it weird. He internally screams at himself.

Dream’s too tired to think too much about this. Dying is a pretty exhausting process, after all. Once his head hits his pillow he instantly knows he won’t be awake for more than another minute. George and Dream say brief ‘goodnights’.

Today might have given him a near death experience, but it also gave him this moment, and he’s thankful for that. Dream thinks this is the happiest night he’s had in a long time...

Dream jerks awake at an odd hour of the night in a cold sweat. He instinctively twists his body off his bed so he is facing the floor when he begins to cough. He’s coughing and coughing but nothing is leaving his throat. Assuming he is choking, he moves his hand up to his mouth. Dream’s hand is maybe an inch away from his face when his movements slow.

He breathes. His lungs fill and he moves his hand back down. The confusion from being pulled out of his sleep fades and he realizes that he wasn’t choking, there just wasn’t anything to cough up. Heart racing, he lays back down on his bed.

He must have had woken up in the middle of the night so many times to cough up a lung that it happened without him thinking now. As Dream is laying down it really starts to hit him that even though the disease is over, the effects might be longer lasting than he thought.

Turning in his bed, he finds himself staring at the other person in his bed. He didn’t forget George was there or anything, it was just moved to the back of his mind during his panic.

Now that he’s looking at George, he thinks he looks very peaceful sleeping. He smiles when he thinks of how George may be a valiant constestor for heaviest sleeper in the world for snoring through Dream’s coughing fit, but he kinda finds it cute. He then figures he really shouldn’t be thinking that.

George is resting with his arm in front of him and his hand is further on Dream’s side of the bed than his own. Dream catches himself off guard when he thinks about how easy it would be to reach over and just cover George’s hand with his own. His face feels warm and he forces himself to turn his body around to face away from his friend.

He won’t allow himself those thoughts. He just wants to go back to sleep.

When he wakes up again, it’s to the sound of a voice. He opens his eyes and lifts his head off the

pillow quickly, he is a light sleeper and it doesn't take much to wake him.

"Good morning," He focuses his sleepy vision on the source of the voice and sees George beside his bed.

"Mornin'" Dream slurs, his voice seeming to wake up slightly delayed.

"I was gonna let you sleep in longer, but I didn't think you'd wanna miss today." George smiles and it's utterly contagious.

Dream is about to ask him what's happening today that he wouldn't want to miss, but George answers him before the question leaves his mouth.

"Happy birthday, Dream!" He hadn't noticed that George had his hands behind his back until he brought them forth. He was holding a wrapped box that Dream figured must be his present.

Dream feels his chest swell with excitement, he can only compare it to a child on Christmas. George is looking at him expectantly and he takes that as his cue to reach over and take the present in his own hands.

"So this is the most amazing gift I was promised?" He asks with a smirk. He contemplates shaking the box up and down to make a guess as to what it is, but goes against the thought in the case it might be fragile.

"Well don't hype it up too much," George smiles at him and moves to sit on the bed next to him. "But yes, it's the most amazing gift."

George urges him to go on and open it when he supposes he's stared at the still wrapped present a little too long. Dream aimlessly rips off the gift wrap and pulls apart the opening of the cardboard box. He's only met with more thin colored paper inside the box. He almost tells George he thinks he might have overdone it on the wrapping, but he's too eager to find out what's inside. His hands dig inside the paper and he pulls out a soft object.

It's a plushie, but not just any plushie, it's Dream's minecraft avatar in a stuffed animal-like form. His heart is fluttering and can't help a wide smile. George wasn't lying when he told him this was the best present. But then again, maybe any gift would be the best if George gave it to him.

"This is awesome, George." Dream turns to him. "You're gonna need to tell me where you got it from, though. My lawyers will be in contact." He jokes at the fact that he hasn't made any merch like this, and makes him impossibly happier when he hears George's laugh.

"I sure hope not," George looks a little bashful as his eyes swap between Dream and the plushie. "I don't think I'd have enough money to deal with a lawsuit."

Dream's thoughts stutter. George made this. *George*. For *him*.

As if Dream thought the fluttering in his chest couldn't get worse, his heart seemingly begins to do flips. He thinks he might be blushing but hopes he's not. Upon closer inspection, Dream can definitely see the out of place stitches that connect the toys head to its body. He begins to feel like he's holding something too precious, like he doesn't deserve all the work put into it.

"I'm glad you like it," George says and Dream tears his eyes away from the toy to look at his friend. "You think it's the most amazing gift?"

Dream thinks it's *better* than the most amazing gift. But, as usual, he's not very good at displaying

his emotions.

“It’s alright, I guess.” He hopes he doesn’t look too flustered.

“Oh shut up.” George playfully shoves Dream.

Dream is made aware that he has slept in past noon, and he and George agree that they’re getting hungry. After looking through his kitchen for food, he comes to realize that it had probably been a month since he had been shopping. He wasn’t really eating and even if he wanted to, he probably couldn’t keep the flowers in his lungs long enough to endure a grocery trip.

George is understanding, if not a little worried, when Dream has to tell him he doesn’t really have the material to make lunch. They simply decided to eat the leftover pizza from the night before. While George heats up the cold pizza, Dream eats his fresh out of the fridge and laughs when George calls him a psychopath for doing so.

While eating, Dream’s eyes drift around the room and wander towards the living room. He saw his couch, which was previously covered in flowers and blood, was clean. He asks George about it, and he tells Dream that he had cleaned it since he woke up early and didn’t have much else to do. Dream immediately went off about how he didn’t have to do that, but George insisted it was fine until he eventually let it go.

Dream eats the rest of his food wordlessly, thinking about how he doesn’t deserve George’s kindness.

After eating, George asks Dream what he wanted to do for his birthday. Admittedly, Dream hadn’t thought much about it, not thinking he was going to live that long made it impossible to plan ahead. George is throwing ideas at him, arcades, bowling alleys, amusement parks, but Dream doesn’t find any appealing. Or rather, he feels he’s probably still too tired for any of those.

He finally decides, he tells George that he just wants to stay home all day and play minecraft. At first George questions him on it, saying he could, and does, do that anytime. But he doesn’t put up a fight and also seems happy at the idea of a minecraft day.

The day goes by uneventfully while they play minecraft minigames on their laptops. Sometime along the way they decide to invite the rest of the gang to play with them. He is wished happy birthday by just about everyone on the server. Sapnap fakes offense when he finds out that ‘Dream invited George to his birthday party and not me’.

However, Dream can’t help the intrusive thoughts that strike him. He finds himself thinking about how he wants George to lean against his shoulder while they play, how he almost hugs him after they win team matches, how he wants to hold him when all the games are over.

Right now, for some reason, he can’t get the fact that he kissed his best friend yesterday out of his head.

Worse yet, he can’t help how he wants to kiss him again more than anything.

He can’t let himself think like this, *he won’t*. Maybe it was fine when he had accepted his own death, but chances are he’s gonna live now, and he can’t keep thinking in a terminal mindset.

Dream respects George’s feelings and would never intentionally make him uncomfortable, and that means all of these fantasies cannot coexist with his relationship with George. But the thoughts come without warning and linger for far too long, it feels like he’s helpless to get rid of them.

Distraction seems like his only option, so he focuses on the video game.

It can't last forever though, it gets dark out and goodbyes are said between friends. Dream is eager for another way to distance himself from the invasive thoughts by busying himself, so he suggests that he and George continue playing by themselves. Unexpectedly, George denies him.

"Actually," George starts. "I should come clean about something."

It catches Dream by surprise and confuses him. He begins to worry that George will begin a more serious conversation.

"What would that be?" He asks carefully.

"I might've picked up a little something while you slept like a log." He smiles and Dream is so relieved that he hasn't brought up a dreadful topic that it takes him a second longer to process what he's been told.

"You already got me a gift, Georgy." He says, he knows if George has gotten him anything close to the value he has placed onto his new plushie he'll feel even more undeserving.

"It's not exactly a gift," is all he receives as a response before George is out of his chair and opening Dream's fridge. He emerges with another boxed item.

George places it onto the table and Dream takes a closer look. The top of the box is a clear thin covering, and Dream realizes that it's a birthday cake.

"I-I got it from some store bakery so I don't know if it'll be any good." He looks a little shy. "But I drew a little icing design on it, so hopefully that makes up for it if it ends up tasting like plastic."

Fuck Dream's heart for beating so fast at every act of kindness George presents to him. He curses himself for just feeling so much at a relatively small gesture. The design George was referring to was a little icing doodle resting atop the cake of Dream's minecraft skin. Something was a little off though.

"Love how you made it yellow instead of green," He smiles knowingly. "It's a nice touch."

"That *is* green!" bless his friends colorblind heart, but it was absolutely not.

George asks him if he has any candles to light for the cake. Dream doesn't, but he offers to pretend to blow out candles for birthday sake. He's not being serious, but he makes George laugh, and that makes his heart soar somehow higher.

Dream cuts off every attempt George makes to sing 'happy birthday' to him. He tells him it would be embarrassing, but truthfully he knows he'll find it too adorable and that it will make his head spin.

They cut into the cake and joke about moments they had while playing minecraft today. At some point while they're talking, George decides to ask Dream what his favorite moment this year was, since he has just passed another year of life. He throws some random exciting moment into the conversation, but Dream knows that the moment he is living through right now is by far his favorite. George begins to speak again.

"So, I maybe have just one more thing for you--"

"C'mon, George, you're killing me with all these gifts. I don't need to die twice in one week."

“I have a feeling you’ll like this one.” George ignores him and says as if Dream didn’t love everything else he’s gotten today.

George leans off the table and reaches into a bag sitting by his chair. Huh, he must’ve gotten that when he got the cake without Dream noticing.

On the table, George places a semi-large glass bottle. It doesn’t take Dream too long to register that he’s just been gifted some sort of alcohol.

“You don’t have to drink it now, I just figured you’d want to try it sometime now that you’re officially 21.” He pushes the bottle in Dream’s direction and it slides across the table. “However, I’m also down if you wanted to try it tonight.”

“Oh hell yeah!” He forgot that he was able to drink now, of course he wants to try it tonight. “I’ll get us some glasses.” He sits up from his chair and moves to his cabinets to retrieve some.

Halfway through his journey to his kitchen, he’s beginning to regret his decision to drink tonight. The gravity of the realization that he doesn’t know how he’ll behave if he’s drunk starts to weigh on him. Obviously he has many words in his head that he’d much rather keep contained, especially regarding George.

But on the other hand, he thinks a little drink is deserved after a near death experience. Besides, he’s already reaching for the glasses.

Dream returns to the table carrying two glasses. He places one in front of George and holds onto the other until he sits back down. George opens the bottle and begins to pour some drinks.

“Since you haven’t drank before, make sure you go slow.” He finishes pouring the alcohol. “And don’t underestimate the pain of hangovers, they will hit you like a *train*.”

“Alright, I get it, not too much tonight.”

George wishes him happy birthday again and Dream takes his first sip of alcohol.

It is disgusting. It hurts as well. He winces and puts his drink down. Belatedly he concludes he must have scratches in his throat from all the coughing, there’s no way it’s supposed to burn this bad.

“Are you holding up okay?” George seemingly notices Dream’s discomfort. Dream shakes his head, it’s just a little pain, he’s alright.

“Never better,” He responds and decides to take another, bigger gulp. The burn is unforgiving, but he decides it’s nothing he can’t handle.

“Alright, just remember to not have too much,”

Turns out, it doesn’t really matter how much Dream drinks, he is outstandingly bad at holding his liquor. At first, all he feels is the sting of the drink as it runs down his throat. Then it evolves into a warm feeling. The pain numbs, and that encourages him to drink more. He has almost 3 servings.

By the time he decides to put down the glass, it’s really beginning to set in. George seems to be handling it fine. Dream isn’t surprised, he’s probably drank before.

While they drink, they continue to talk. They move to the now cleaned couch at some point so they can relax more than the kitchen chairs would allow.

You could say the conversation got deeper as the night progressed and as the drink flowed further into Dream's blood until he figured it had finished embedding itself. When it had, Dream distantly worried that his inhibitions would fade. He agreed with himself that he would have to be extra careful. Of course, he breaks that promise not even minutes later when his mind supplies him with what is probably the dumbest question he could have asked.

"Sooo, whatever happened with Maia?"

The way George freezes is what makes Dream aware of what he's just asked. He's never been more completely sure he has no more than a single brain cell. He needs to apologize-

"What do you mean?" George's words come out a little more slurred than they would have if he were sober.

"Y'know, just, like," He pauses and moves his hand around aimlessly, thinking of what to say, Some part of his head reminds him that he really shouldn't say *anything*. "I dunno, what's the story, I guess?"

Dream watches and George takes another drink, maybe to avoid answering the question. But after he finishes, he responds.

"It didn't work out." He answers simply. There isn't, or at least there doesn't seem to be, any tension in his voice. He still seems relaxed and looks like he could still be smiling. That fact is able to Dream at least a little calm.

"Why not?"

He really shouldn't be pushing. But he also *really* wants to know. He pretends like the confirmation of George not being in a relationship makes him feel...a little hopeful? He almost physically hits himself in the head to quiet his mind.

"It's..." George pauses. "I don't know if I should go in detail."

Dream disagrees. He would really like to hear this in detail. He hates himself for it, but he is overwhelmingly curious.

"I don't mind." Dream says to assure George. He figures George must be worried that Dream must be jealous over Maia. And, yes, that might be true, but he is certain that somehow it doesn't matter.

"Honestly?" He looks off. "She was really nice, obviously she liked me, but..."

Dream wishes George would stop with the pauses, it's beginning to make his drunk heart race with anticipation.

"I thought maybe I liked someone else."

It is absolutely unfair how those words punch Dream in the gut. Great. It's not Maia. Just someone else he probably has no chance to compete with. His mind is yelling at him from so many directions. He's telling himself these feelings are stupid and how he should just get over them while also hating himself for knowing he's not good enough compared to anyone George would consider liking.

"Who?" Dream asks against what could be called his better judgement.

"Dream-" George cuts himself off by forcing a laugh. He doesn't continue after that like Dream

expects him to.

He says it to himself again, this time with more emphasis, he *really* shouldn't be pushing. Likely this isn't a good conversation for either of them, given the circumstances. But on the other hand, he wants to know more than anything, he *needs* to know.

"George, I know it's probably a weird thing to talk about right now, but," He trails off while his intoxicated brain looks for the right words. "You said earlier nothing would change, yeah? Just tell me man, as your friend."

Dream wonders how well he's hiding his anxiety towards what George's answer will be. He figures it can't be that well by how his drunk state isn't doing him any favors.

George's silence is worrying him. He's holding his breath. For a moment he considers, what if it's someone he *knows*? What if that's why he won't tell him? Holy shit, what if it was like Sapnap or something? What if it was-

"You." George's eyes stare into him. "It's you, Dream."

...

Unfortunate. Dream really thought he had lived. Nah. He has to be dead, right? His thoughts go from completely still to a mile a minute. He has to be in heaven, or hell, maybe. This *can't* be happening. He must have misheard, he has to make sure.

"Uh, what was, um, repeat that?"

"I thought that- no, I think I like you."

Dream, stupidly, points to himself.

George, arguably equally as dumb, nods.

"It started maybe two months ago- or maybe longer, I'm not sure." George is blushing. "I was kinda planning to tell you during this visit but, uh, clearly some other things came up, and I thought it should probably wait."

Dream is confident he proceeds to implode. He is filled with so many emotions that he is shaking. It's almost like he's unable to hold himself together. Mouth tilting to form a hesitant smile, he looks intently at George. His smile is returned by his friend and he can't hold back anymore, he wraps George in the biggest hug he can manage.

"You should have told me. Oh my god, you should've told me. Why didn't you tell me?" Dream is leaning down to rest his head on George's shoulder. For a second he really thinks he's gonna start crying.

"I could ask you the same thing." George's laugh sounds a little broken. Dream can't see him, but he thinks maybe he's in the same state of anxious joy as Dream.

They pull away after a moment, arms still partially wrapped around each other, and George speaks again.

"Dream, I can't promise anything, but," His eyes dance around the room before landing on Dream again. "I-I wanna try this, if you do."

They crash into another hug, Dream never wants to let him go. All of the pain he went through, all of the aches and exhaustion of disease, it means fucking *nothing*. He doesn't *care*. No matter what he had to go through, he would do it again in a heartbeat. This moment alone is worth everything.

"Please," Dream could sob with how bad he wants this.

Dream thinks almost dying is the best thing that's ever happened to him.

Chapter End Notes

Thank everyone so so much for all the positive feedback! I loved reading the comments and tried my best to create a worthy part 2 where there is a little less angst. I'll be trying to create other works in this fandom so if you have any suggestions let me know! Thank you again :))

End Notes

Aaaa this is my first fanfic on here so don't judge too hard shsjshsksjsk,,if people actually like this, let me know if you want a part 2!!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!